

NCA
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PUBLIC POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

ANNCR:

HIGH LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MET WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON TUESDAY (MAR 14) TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL POSITION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY. VOA SCIENCE EDITOR LASZLO DOSA PREPARED THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

THE MEETING WAS HELD IN ANTICIPATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE NEXT YEAR IN VIENNA. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT INVITED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BUSINESS WORLD TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY FROM HIGHLY INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS, SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES, TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THAT WILL BE THE MAIN TOPIC OF THE VIENNA CONFERENCE.

IN RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INVITATION, INDUSTRY LEADERS HELD SOME FORTY MEETINGS TO PREPARE PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AS IT DEVELOPS U.S. POLICY ON TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER. THE GIST OF THESE PROPOSALS IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT AMERICAN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICES IN TRANSFERRING TECHNOLOGY.

THE WASHINGTON MEETING WAS ADDRESSED BY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE LUCY WILSON BENSON WHO DECLARED THAT IT IS IN THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST TO HAVE A "WORLD THAT IS PEACEFUL, SECURE AND PROSPEROUS." INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IS ONE FACTOR IN CREATING SUCH A WORLD. THE OTHER IS A COMMITMENT TO HELP THE POOR COUNTRIES DEVELOP THE CAPACITY TO HELP THEMSELVES.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IS ONE WAY OF HELPING THE POOR COUNTRIES TOWARD REACHING THAT GOAL. BUT UNDER SECRETARY BENSON STRESSED THAT THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, IN THE LONG RUN, WILL HAVE ONLY VERY LIMITED USE, UNLESS IT BECOMES SELF-SUSTAINING. IN OTHER WORDS, IT MUST INCLUDE NOT ONLY "MACHINERY, SEEDS AND TECHNIQUES" BUT THE TRAINING OF MACHINISTS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS.

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEED MORE THAN BLUEPRINTS AND FACTORIES. THEY NEED LIBRARIES AND SCHOOLS. AND, AS UNDER SECRETARY BENSON PUT IT, "THE CHALLENGE IS NOT JUST TO TRAIN APPRENTICES BUT TO TRAIN PEOPLE TO TRAIN THEIR OWN APPRENTICES SO THAT THE PROCESS BECOMES SELF-SUSTAINING." SHE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT COMMANDS SIGNIFICANT TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN SUCH AREAS AS AGRICULTURE, HEALTH OR EDUCATION, THE OVERWHELMING PROPORTION OF THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES, AND THEIR RELATED HUMAN SKILLS, LIE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. AND THAT IS WHY IN ANTICIPATION OF NEXT YEAR'S UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE, THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS THE COOPERATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN DEVELOPING PUBLIC POLICY FOR THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY.

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